| **The Art of Funny** |
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| Before Reading PollSummer camps offer a wide variety of learning opportunities for kids. Some people say these camps give kids a much-needed break from technology. What do you think?Having new learning opportunities is more important now than ever before.Top of Form* Agree
* Disagree

Explain why you voted the way you did.  |
| ArticlePage 1imagePhoto credit: AP/Larry NeumeisterZach Rosenfeld, 14, delivers his act at the 2012 Kids 'N Comedy holiday show at the Gotham Comedy Club in New York City. **NEW YORK, New York** (Achieve3000, March 5, 2013). At the Gotham Comedy Club in New York City, 16-year-old Eric Kurn climbed onto the stage. He gave the packed audience a look of wide-eyed bewilderment before launching into his deadpan bit. "I think it's time I had a girlfriend," Eric said. "There's just one little problem. None of the girls I know think it's time I had a girlfriend. Even some of the girls I don't know yet agree with that." The crowd responded with bursts of laughter.Getting laughs, sometimes at his own expense, is exactly what Eric is learning to do.Eric is a student at Kids 'N Comedy, a New York City-based program that teaches aspiring comedians all about the art of being funny. The program was founded in 1996 by Stu and Jo Ann Grossman. It offers a series of nine-week comedy training classes and two-week summer camps for kids ages 9 to 18. It's a chance for class clowns to hone their comedy skills—without ending up in the principal's office.Trained by professional comedians, Kids 'N Comedy students learn all about the nuances and fundamentals of comedy. They're taught how to write one-liners, how to create an act, and how to deliver that act on stage. Class participants are often encouraged to craft jokes based on their life experiences. They then refine those thoughts into an act."We try to motivate them to write all the time," Jo Ann Grossman said. "If you want to keep it fresh, you have to keep on writing."At the end of their basic training in comedy club work, the students are given an opportunity to try out their material in front of a live, paying audience of strangers.For Zach Rosenfeld, 14, delivering that performance was the hardest part of the program—at least at first. Zach started taking Kids 'N Comedy classes when he was 9. He recalled that while preparing for his first experience on stage, he was frozen by the sheer fear of failing to be funny. He said he sat nervously backstage, trying to remember his lines, only to get before the crowd and forget most of them."I was very nervous," Zach said. "But after sitting through a couple of those classes, I started to open up....The class teaches you to calm down and not be so scared."Even after bombing at his first performance, Zach said he knew he would perform again. And he has. Most recently, Zach did his act at the 2012 Kids 'N Comedy holiday show at the Gotham Comedy Club. This time, the relatively seasoned jokester won the crowd over."When you hear laughter on the stage, it's one of the greatest things on the face of the earth," Zach said. "You're shining in the stage's light, and people like you."Zach wasn't the only shining star at the holiday show. Leo Frampton, 17, was another crowd favorite. He said he gets annoyed during holiday breaks when adults ask him if he's looking forward to returning to school. He joked that he'd like to counter, "Hey, it's almost tax season….Looking forward to going back to the office?"The 2012 holiday show set an important milestone for the program: It was Kids 'N Comedy's first sold-out show. For Grossman, the accomplishment served as evidence of the hard work of the talented students."To see these kids—they're funny, they're really funny," Jo Ann Grossman said. "Nobody's doing knock-knock jokes."*The Associated Press contributed to this story.*Page 2Dig DeeperimagePhoto credit: AP/The Free Press, Janet S. Carter A camp counselor helps a young camper into the water at a summer camp at Neuseway Park's Nature Center in Kinston, North Carolina. In "The Art of Funny," you read about a program that offers summer camps where kids learn the art of stand-up comedy. A summer camp is a place that provides kids with activities during their time off from school. There are all kinds of summer camps in the United States—arts camps, sports camps, academic camps, and camps that offer a little bit of everything. There are day camps, where kids go only during the day, and sleep-away camps. Camps have existed in the U.S. for more than 150 years.Summer camp probably originated in the summer of 1861. That's when William Frederick Gunn and his wife Abigail, headmasters of a private school in Connecticut, decided to take some of the boys into nature. This idea probably didn't surprise the students; the Gunns loved the outdoors and promoted the importance of exercise. They often canceled classes when the weather was nice, opting instead to take the students on long hikes. They sometimes hiked to a campsite in the wilderness, several miles from the school. The students stayed there for two weeks. Their activities included swimming, boating, and fishing. In the evenings, the Gunns and their charges would gather around a fire and sing songs.Summer camp appealed to the Gunns and their students for the same reason camp is popular today: It gave the campers a chance to get away from their day-to-day lives and try something new. In the 19th century, the U.S. was becoming more urban. The cities were full of crowded neighborhoods and the smells of factories, while the country offered fresh air and natural beauty. Parents wanted their children to be in a healthier environment, if only for a short time. In this quiet environment, campers bonded with their peers and sometimes even learned new skills, such as starting campfires and foraging for berries.By 1900, several individuals and organizations had established summer camps. At first, all camps were for boys only. Some of them aimed to teach boys skills that weren't taught in classrooms during the school year. Others hoped to build a sense of responsibility in boys from wealthy families, who were used to being waited upon by servants. In 1892, Camp Arey in New York became the first camp to admit girls. Within 10 years, several other girls' summer camps had opened. One of them, Camp Wyonegonic in Maine, is the oldest continuously operating camp for girls in the U.S.Summer camps were influenced by certain cultural traditions that reflected the aims of the camps. Boy Scout and Girl Scout camps both adopted military traditions. Campers are required to stick to a strict schedule and eat in mess halls, for example. These traditions help maintain discipline at the camps and promote responsibility in campers. Other camps adopted certain Native American traditions. In the early 20th century, naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton established the Woodcraft League of America, which promoted Native American practices in summer camps. Woodcraft was all about survival and respect for nature.Summer camps became a more established part of American society in 1910, with the founding of the American Camp Association (ACA). The ACA is an association for camps and their owners.Camp was popular from the start, but for decades, many excluded minorities. In 1950, the ACA resolved that its meetings for camp owners would be held only in places where minorities were welcome. Fifteen years later, due to complaints about racial discrimination, the ACA revised its bylaws to state that ACA membership and jobs would be open to all, regardless of "race or creed." It also recommended that ACA member camps be open to children of all races and religions. This change caused many camps to leave the ACA. Some did not return for many years. However, the new law helped open summer camps to all American children.Today, children continue to attend summer camp as an escape and a chance to make new friends. Many camps say that the experience is more important than ever, since kids often spend more time in front of iPad and iPod screens than they do outdoors. Kids at summer camps are learning new skills, and they're also connecting with the world around them.Dictionary

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| **aspiring** *(adjective)*    trying to reach a goal |
| **deadpan** *(adjective)*    having a matter-of-fact style or manner, without expression |
| **hone** *(verb)*    to perfect or refine |
| **milestone** *(noun)*    an important or meaningful event |
| **nuance** *(noun)*    a subtle characteristic of something |

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| ActivityPage 1

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| Top of Form1. What is this article mainly about?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif  A teen comedian named Eric Kurn who performed at New York's Gotham Comedy Club in 2012
* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif  The Kids 'N Comedy program's recent milestone
* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif  A program called Kids 'N Comedy that teaches kids how to write jokes and develop comedy acts
* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif  The requirements and responsibilities of a comedian

Bottom of Form |
| Top of Form2. According to the article, why did Zach do better in his most recent show than he did the first time he performed?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif

He spent his time backstage reviewing and trying to remember his lines.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif

The holiday show was the first sold-out show for the Kids 'N Comedy program.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif

He learned how to craft and refine jokes based on his life experiences.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif

The Kids 'N Comedy classes taught him how to calm down and not be scared.Bottom of Form |

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| Top of Form3. Which two words from the article are the closest **synonyms**?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif

Motivate and encourage* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif

Nervous and basic* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif

Nuance and comedy* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif

Bewilderment and thoughtBottom of Form |
| Top of Form4. Which question is **not** answered by the article?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif

How many students have participated in the Kids 'N Comedy program?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif

How did the holiday show set a milestone for the Kids 'N Comedy program?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif

Who founded the Kids 'N Comedy program?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif

What does the Kids 'N Comedy program teach its students?Bottom of Form |

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| Top of Form5. Which of these is **most** important to include in a summary of this article?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif

Seventeen-year-old Leo Frampton gets annoyed when adults ask him if he's looking forward to going back to school.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif

The Kids 'N Comedy program offers two-week summer camps for kids ages 9 to 18.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif

Kids 'N Comedy is a New York City-based program that teaches aspiring young comedians about the art of being funny.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif

A 2012 show at the Gotham Comedy Club marked the first sold-out show for Kids 'N Comedy.Bottom of Form |
| Top of Form6. Which of the following is a statement of fact?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif

Eric Kurn's humorous deadpan bit was the best performance of all during the 2012 holiday show in New York.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif

The 2012 holiday show at the Gotham Comedy Club was the first sold-out show in the history of Kids 'N Comedy.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif

The Grossmans are really gifted teachers, and they are especially good at working with shy teenagers.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif

Zach Rosenfeld's clever jokes and entertaining performance in the holiday show suggest that he will be a great comedian.Bottom of Form |

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| Top of Form7. The article states:**He recalled that while preparing for his first experience on stage, he was *frozen* by the sheer fear of failing to be funny.**Which would be the closest **synonym** for the word *frozen*?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif

Displeased* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif

Paralyzed* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif

Complicated* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif

ModeratedBottom of Form |
| Top of Form8. The author's purpose for writing this article was probably to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif

Review the recent performance of aspiring young comedian Eric Kurn* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif

Persuade young readers to sign up for a summer camp with Kids 'N Comedy* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif

Inform readers about a training program for aspiring young comedians* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif

Advertise for the Kids 'N Comedy program's upcoming show in New YorkBottom of Form |

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| After Reading PollNow that you have read the article, indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement.Having new learning opportunities is more important now than ever before.Top of Form* Agree
* Disagree

Bottom of Form |
| Thought QuestionImagine you are making a documentary about the Kids 'N Comedy program and the history of summer camps. From the readings, identify important events that you would include in your film. Be sure to explain why each event is important. Support your response with information from the lesson.Type your answer in the text box below. |
| Poll ResultsOPINION STATEMENT: Having new learning opportunities is more important now than ever before.

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| Before Reading | After Reading |
| How you voted |
| Agree | Agree |
| Disagree | Disagree |
| National results |
| Agree |  | 89% | Agree |  | 92% |
| Disagree |  | 11% | Disagree |  | 8% |
| 8% changed their opinion after reading the article. |

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| Stretch ArticlePage 1imagePhoto credit: AP/Larry NeumeisterZach Rosenfeld, 14, delivers his act at the 2012 Kids 'N Comedy holiday show at the Gotham Comedy Club in New York City. **NEW YORK, New York** (Achieve3000, March 5, 2013). At the Gotham Comedy Club in New York City, 16-year-old Eric Kurn climbed onto the stage and gave the packed audience a look of wide-eyed bewilderment before launching into his deadpan bit. "I think it's time I had a girlfriend," Eric said. "There's just one little problem. None of the girls I know think it's time I had a girlfriend. Even some of the girls I don't know yet agree with that," the budding comic continued, drawing cascades of laughter from the crowd.Getting laughs, sometimes at his own expense, is precisely what Eric is learning to do.Eric is a student at Kids 'N Comedy, a New York City-based program that teaches aspiring comedians all about the art of being funny. The program, founded in 1996 by Stu and Jo Ann Grossman, offers a series of nine-week comedy training classes and two-week summer camps for kids ages 9 to 18. It's a chance for class clowns to hone their comedy chops—without ending up in the principal's office.Under the guidance of professional comedians, Kids 'N Comedy students learn all about the nuances and fundamentals of comedy, including how to write one-liners, how to create an act, and how to deliver that act on stage. Class participants are often encouraged to craft jokes based on their life experiences, and then refine those thoughts into an act."We try to motivate them to write all the time," Jo Ann Grossman said. "If you want to keep it fresh, you have to keep on writing."At the end of their basic training in comedy club work, the students are given a final exam of sorts: an opportunity to try out their material in front of a live, paying audience of strangers.For Zach Rosenfeld, 14, delivering that performance was the hardest part of the program—at least at first. Zach started taking Kids 'N Comedy classes when he was 9. He recalled that while preparing for his first experience on stage, he was frozen by the sheer fear of failing to be funny. He said he sat nervously backstage, tapping his foot and trying to remember his lines, only to get before the crowd and forget most of them."I was very nervous," Zach said. "But after sitting through a couple of those classes, I started to open up more and more....The class teaches you to calm down and not be so scared."Even after bombing at his first performance, Zach said he knew he would perform again—and he has. Most recently, Zach did his act at the 2012 Kids 'N Comedy holiday show at the Gotham Comedy Club, and this time, the relatively seasoned jokester won the crowd over."When you hear laughter on the stage, it's one of the greatest things on the face of the earth," Zach said. "You're shining in the stage's light, and people like you."Zach wasn't the only shining star at the holiday show. Val Bodurtha, 16, pulled out a banjo and sang a song chastising classmates who tout views on social issues and politics online. "You should really learn your facts before you begin to speak," she sang.Leo Frampton, 17, another crowd favorite, said he gets annoyed during holiday breaks when adults repeatedly ask him if he's looking forward to returning to school. He joked that he'd like to counter, "Hey, it's almost tax season….Looking forward to going back to the office?"The 2012 holiday show set an important milestone for the program: It was the first sold-out show in the history of Kids 'N Comedy. For Grossman, the accomplishment was a testament not just to the strength of the workshops, but also to the hard work of the talented students."To see these kids—they're funny, they're really funny," Jo Ann Grossman said. "Nobody's doing knock-knock jokes."*The Associated Press contributed to this story.*Page 2Dig DeeperimagePhoto credit: AP/The Free Press, Janet S. Carter A camp counselor helps a young camper into the water at a summer camp at Neuseway Park's Nature Center in Kinston, North Carolina. In "The Art of Funny," you read about a program that offers summer camps where kids learn the art of stand-up comedy. A summer camp is a place that provides kids with activities during their time off from school. There are all kinds of summer camps in the United States—arts camps, sports camps, academic camps, and camps that offer a little bit of everything. There are day camps, where kids go only during the day, and sleep-away camps. Camps have existed in the U.S. for more than 150 years.Summer camp probably originated in the summer of 1861. That's when William Frederick Gunn and his wife Abigail, headmasters of a private school in Connecticut, decided to take some of the boys into nature. This idea probably didn't surprise the students; the Gunns loved the outdoors and promoted the importance of exercise. They often canceled classes when the weather was nice, opting instead to take the students on long hikes. They sometimes hiked to a campsite in the wilderness, several miles from the school. The students stayed there for two weeks. Their activities included swimming, boating, and fishing. In the evenings, the Gunns and their charges would gather around a fire and sing songs.Summer camp appealed to the Gunns and their students for the same reason camp is popular today: It gave the campers a chance to get away from their day-to-day lives and try something new. In the 19th century, the U.S. was becoming more urban. The cities were full of crowded neighborhoods and the smells of factories, while the country offered fresh air and natural beauty. Parents wanted their children to be in a healthier environment, if only for a short time. In this quiet environment, campers bonded with their peers and sometimes even learned new skills, such as starting campfires and foraging for berries.By 1900, several individuals and organizations had established summer camps. At first, all camps were for boys only. Some of them aimed to teach boys skills that weren't taught in classrooms during the school year. Others hoped to build a sense of responsibility in boys from wealthy families, who were used to being waited upon by servants. In 1892, Camp Arey in New York became the first camp to admit girls. Within 10 years, several other girls' summer camps had opened. One of them, Camp Wyonegonic in Maine, is the oldest continuously operating camp for girls in the U.S.Summer camps were influenced by certain cultural traditions that reflected the aims of the camps. Boy Scout and Girl Scout camps both adopted military traditions. Campers are required to stick to a strict schedule and eat in mess halls, for example. These traditions help maintain discipline at the camps and promote responsibility in campers. Other camps adopted certain Native American traditions. In the early 20th century, naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton established the Woodcraft League of America, which promoted Native American practices in summer camps. Woodcraft was all about survival and respect for nature.Summer camps became a more established part of American society in 1910, with the founding of the American Camp Association (ACA). The ACA is an association for camps and their owners.Camp was popular from the start, but for decades, many excluded minorities. In 1950, the ACA resolved that its meetings for camp owners would be held only in places where minorities were welcome. Fifteen years later, due to complaints about racial discrimination, the ACA revised its bylaws to state that ACA membership and jobs would be open to all, regardless of "race or creed." It also recommended that ACA member camps be open to children of all races and religions. This change caused many camps to leave the ACA. Some did not return for many years. However, the new law helped open summer camps to all American children.Today, children continue to attend summer camp as an escape and a chance to make new friends. Many camps say that the experience is more important than ever, since kids often spend more time in front of iPad and iPod screens than they do outdoors. Kids at summer camps are learning new skills, and they're also connecting with the world around them.Dictionary

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| **chastise** *(verb)*    to scold |
| **deadpan** *(adjective)*    having a matter-of-fact style or manner, without expression |
| **nuance** *(noun)*    a subtle characteristic of something |

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| Stretch ActivityPage 1

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| Top of Form1. The best alternate headline for this article would be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif

Program Provides Training for Kids and Teens With Dreams of Becoming Comedians* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif

Career Options: A Day in the Life of a Professional Stand-Up Comedian* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif

Kids 'N Comedy's Holiday Show Sells Out in Record Time* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif

Entertainment Review: Teen Comedian Eric Kurn Charms Gotham Comedy Club AudienceBottom of Form |
| Top of Form2. According to the article, why did Zach do better in his most recent show than he did the first time he performed?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif

Because the Kids 'N Comedy program teaches kids how to open up and remain calm on stage* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif

Because his 2012 performance was part of a sold-out show in front of a packed audience* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif

Because the Kids 'N Comedy program teaches kids how to refine jokes about life into an act* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif

Because his 2012 performance was at the Gotham Comedy Club in New York CityBottom of Form |

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| Top of Form3. Which is the closest **antonym** for the word *chastise*?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif

Recall* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif

Applaud* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif

Belittle* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif

EnvisionBottom of Form |
| Top of Form4. Which question is **not** answered by the article?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif

What led the Grossmans to start the program?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif

What does Zach find appealing about performing comedy?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif

What kinds of things do the program's participants learn?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif

What age range is the program designed for?Bottom of Form |

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| Top of Form5. Which of these is **not** important to include in a summary of this article?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif

At the Gotham Comedy Club, Eric Kurn climbed onto the stage and gave the packed audience a look of bewilderment.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif

At the end of their training, the program's participants are given an opportunity to perform in front of an audience of strangers.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif

The program's participants learn how to write one-liners, how to create an act, and how to deliver that act on stage.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif

Kids 'N Comedy is a program in New York City that teaches kids and teens all about being a comedian.Bottom of Form |
| Top of Form6. Which of the following is a statement of opinion?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif

The New York City-based program, Kids 'N Comedy, was founded in 1996 by Stu and Jo Ann Grossman.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif

Eric Kurn's humorous deadpan bit was the best performance of all during the 2012 holiday show in New York City.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif

The 2012 Kids 'N Comedy holiday show at the Gotham Comedy Club was the first sold-out show in the program's history.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif

Zach Rosenfeld sat nervously backstage, trying to remember his lines, only to get before the crowd and forget most of them.Bottom of Form |

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| Top of Form7. The article states:**The program, founded in 1996 by Stu and Jo Ann Grossman, offers a series of nine-week comedy training classes and two-week summer camps for kids ages 9 to 18. It's a chance for class clowns to *hone* their comedy chops—without ending up in the principal's office.**Which would be the closest **synonym** for the word *hone*?* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif

Refine* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif

Preview* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif

Encore* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif

AspireBottom of Form |
| Top of Form8. The author's purpose for writing this article was probably to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif

Inform readers about the program that Stu and Jo Ann Grossman created for aspiring young comedians* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif

Persuade readers between the ages of 9 and 18 to sign up for a summer camp with Kids 'N Comedy* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif

Advertise for the Kids 'N Comedy program's upcoming show in New York* http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif

Review the recent performance of aspiring young comedian Eric KurnBottom of Form |

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